

Application No.: 10/763,722

Docket No.: 63427-0279

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Claims 1-10 and 21-23 remain under consideration, along with newly presented dependent claims 24-25. Independent claims 1 and 21 have been amended to more clearly contrast the present invention with the cited prior art. Claims 11-20 have been cancelled.

Original claims 1-20 were rejected as anticipated by Rozon '779. Rozon '779 discloses an endless loop cord system where the total length of the cord hanging from the headrail is constant and the cord has no free ends. Upper and lower clamp members 28, 30 selectively grip cord strands 10,12, respectively, of endless cord loop 8. Springs 60 normally bias the clamping members out of gripping engagement with the cord strands. To open the blinds, a first of the clamp members is depressed to grip its associated cord strand so that such first clamped pair of elements may move together to achieve the desired degree of opening. To close the blinds, the other clamp member is depressed to grip the other cord strand so that second pair of clamped elements may move together to achieve the desired degree of closing.

Significantly, in Rozon '779: (1) the cord is an endless loop; (2) the element that is selectively gripped by the clamping member is one or the other of the two strands of the cord; and (3) the clamps are normally released, with clamping being required to move the cords for adjustment of the blinds.

In contrast, amended independent claims 1 and 21 require that: (1) the cord has "*a free end*;" (2) the element that is selectively clamped is the "*encapsulating member*;" and (3) the clamping or locking member is "*normally engaged . . . to prevent movement*." That is, referring to the embodiment of Figure 2, for example, the free end of cord 48 is connected to locking member 70 via link 62. The edges of aperture 72 in locking member 70 normally bind against (i.e., clamp onto) encapsulating member 58 when in the position of Figure 2, as a result of the

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gravity-induced tension in cord 48 pulling upward at lower connecting end 66 and pivoting the locking member clockwise about pivot 76. This clamping or locking action prevents the locking member and cord 48 from moving. When handle 74 and locking member extension 78 are manually gripped and moved to the position of Figure 8, aperture 72 no longer binds on encapsulating member 58, and locking member 70 and cord 48 are free to move upward or downward relative to encapsulating member 58.

Thus, claim 1 as amended, along with dependent claims 2-10 and 24, include multiple structural limitations not disclosed or rendered obvious by Rozon '779. These are fundamental distinctions that make the construction and operation of the claimed invention significantly different from Rozon '779.

Claims 21-23 were rejected as anticipated by Huang '832. Huang '832 discloses a system wherein pull cords 400 are normally clamped between conical surfaces 22,42 within elongated sleeve 70 by virtue of biasing spring 50. The excess length of cords 400 protrudes out of the bottom of sleeve 70 and may be looped over external hooks 741 (which loops are potentially dangerous for small children). To raise the blind slats, the free ends of cords 400 are unhooked from their external storage hooks and pulled downwardly within sleeve 70, thereby forcing lower conical clamping surface 42 downwardly against spring 50 to release cords 400 from the now separated upper and lower clamping surfaces 22,42. Once the slats have been positioned as desired, the downward manually applied force on cords 400 is released to enable spring 50 to re-establish the clamping action of clamping surface 42 on the cords. To lower the blind slats, a downward force is manually applied to sleeve 70, thereby moving lower conical clamping surface 42 downward with it, to release cords 400 and enable the cords to pass upwardly through sleeve 70.

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Significantly, Huang '832 differs from amended independent claim 21 in that (1) the element that is gripped by the locking members 22, 42 is the control cord, not the cord encapsulating member; and (2) the locking members 22,42 are connected to portions of the sleeve 70, not to the free end of the cord for movement therewith. These fundamental differences in structure and operation are not obvious, and claims 21-23 and 25 are therefore believed to be patentable over the cited art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

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**CONCLUSION**

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes any fee due has been addressed in an accompanying transmittal. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 18-0013, under Order No. 63427-0279 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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